



*Bernard C. "Jack" Young  
Mayor*

**COMMISSION FOR  
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL  
PRESERVATION**

*Tom Liebel, Chairman*

**STAFF REPORT**



*Chris Ryer  
Director*

**May 14, 2019**

**REQUEST:** Construct Eight-Story Addition on Rear of Historic Building. Alterations to Existing Building.

**ADDRESS:** 1001-1003 North Charles Street

**PETITIONER(S):** City House, Owner  
SM+P, Architect

**STAFF:** Caitlin Audette

**RECOMMENDATION:** Conditional Approval

**SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT:**

General Area: The Mount Vernon Historic District encompasses roughly 40 blocks surrounding Mount Vernon Place. The contributing buildings within the historic district include a diversity of styles and building types including mansions, apartments, offices, and religious structures. The period of significance for the Mount Vernon Historic District extends from 1810 to 1945.

Site Conditions: The subject area is composed of two buildings on one consolidated lot along N. Charles Street. The two historic buildings are connected via a one-story hyphen. The building at 1001 N. Charles Street is located at the northeast corner of N. Charles and W. Eager Streets. This corner property is a three-bay, four-story masonry building with a series of rear appendages that range from three to one-story in height. The building includes a non-historic storefront that wraps around the corner of the first floor and a mansard roof with three pediment capped dormers. Additional architectural features include decorative lintels at the second floor, large banded signage connecting the two buildings, and a contemporary cornice above the sign. The Eager Street elevation is less decorative with additional storefronts at the first floor, one window on the upper levels, and a black metal fire escape. The rear appendage includes a solid door, shutter-covered windows, and large shutters blocking a second floor patio.

The property dates to the mid-1800s and retains the same general footprint with a large two-story rear appendage and a one-story area fronting Eager Street. The fourth floor mansard roof was added at a later date between 1890 and 1901. The 1890s Sanborn Map shows that the building housed a drugstore, though it was likely originally built as a single family home. The property housed a variety of commercial enterprises including stores and restaurants. In the 1970s the property was Dilly's Luncheonette. Following this use it was converted to a bar. In the early 1990s the current owner purchased the building and opened "Central Station" an earlier name for the current Grand Central, for which the existing signage was approved in 2003.

1003 N. Charles Street is a three-bay, three-story masonry building. The first floor has been heavily altered over the years with a number of different storefront designs. A one-story appendage along N. Charles Street dates to the early 1900s, though it was altered in the late 20th century to connect to 1001 N. Charles Street. The building features a contemporary cornice at the first floor, decorative lintels at the second floor and a modest cornice at the third floor. The first floor hyphen is capped by a contemporary decorative metal railing.

The building was initially constructed as a dwelling in the mid-1800s, as shown in the 1869 E. Sachse & Co. Bird Eye View of the City of Baltimore.

## **BACKGROUND**

- The buildings have both had extensive alterations, most of which date to the early and mid-1900s as the buildings changed commercial uses. Signage and storefront design have been approved by CHAP in the 1990s and 2000s.

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes the demolition of the rear of 1001-1003 N. Charles Street to allow for the construction of a new eight-story addition to the historic buildings fronting on Charles Street. The new addition will include a small area of frontage on Charles Street, where the existing hyphen is proposed for demolition and replacement with a glass curtain wall. The applicant also proposes a fourth-story addition at 1003 N. Charles Street, the introduction of windows on the Eager Street elevation of 1001 N. Charles, the painting of the historic buildings, and a new storefront.

## **APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES**

CHAP staff applied Chapter 2: Design Guidelines for Additions, New Construction, and Non-Contributing Buildings. These were used rather than the Mount Vernon Design Guidelines for New Construction, as the Mount Vernon Guidelines specifically state the

following, “These guidelines are not to be used for additions to contributing and non-contributing buildings and structures.”

- The proposed building is approximately 90’-100’, this is within the height limit for the area of 120’.
- Guidelines 2.1 Guiding Principles for New Design:
  - The proposed building will require the demolition of the rear of the buildings. The rear portions appear to largely be original to the buildings, though altered. These portions of the buildings are secondary to the main massing and lack the ornamental detail found on the main massings of the buildings.
  - The guidelines state, “Design new buildings to visually relate to the historic environment. Respect the established design precedent in the immediate area.” The proposed addition will extend four-five stories above the historic buildings. The immediate area includes large scale three and four-story commercial and residential properties including the Maryland Club directly to the south of Eager Street, three-story rowhouses on Eager Street, one-story former Hippo building at the southwest corner of the intersection and a street level parking lot opposite Charles Street. Within one block there are a number of mid-rise buildings including the 13-story Belvedere Hotel, 12-story 1001 Saint Paul Street, and 10-story 1000 Saint Paul Street.
- Guideline 2.2 Site Design:
  - The proposed new construction is set back approximately 30’ from the Charles Street facade. This is unusual as no other buildings in the vicinity have a tiered or setback massing, though there are a wide variety of heights within the area.
- Guideline 2.3 Scale and Form:
  - This guideline states, “The scale and form of new buildings must be compatible with the height and depth of surrounding buildings. Where there is variation of building height within the immediate neighborhood, the new building should generally relate to the predominant pattern.” The proposed eight-story building is significantly larger than the other buildings that front Eager Street.
  - The floor-to-floor heights of the proposed addition generally relate to the floor-to-floor heights of the surrounding historic buildings.
  - The proposed flat roof is compatible with the pattern of the area.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS**

The Mount Vernon ARC was informed of the proposal. No response has been provided to CHAP staff at this time.

## **ANALYSIS**

CHAP staff finds the proposed mass and scale of the new construction generally meets the design guidelines. However, staff has a number of concerns/questions with the proposal that are outlined below.

- Restoration of historic corner building - Due to the demolition of the rear appendages, restoration of the retained portions of the building is important.
  - The proposal to replace the existing asphalt shingles at the mansard roof with standing seam metal is inappropriate and a slate or faux slate should be employed.
  - The introduction of new windows on Eager Street does not meet our guidelines which state that no new openings can be installed on street elevations.
  - Compelling evidence will be required to show that painting the building masonry is necessary.
- New Construction.
  - The use of the small scale massing of the three-bay three-story section that attempts to relate to the rowhouses on Eager Street is understandable; however, the current proposal feels inauthentic as it doesn't reflect the use of the interior. Staff recommends redesigning the tower massing to meet Eager Street in a way that relates to the new tower, while still respecting the lower scale rowhouses on Eager Street. The glass curtain wall used at Charles Street may be something that could be replicated at Eager Street.
  - The push and pull of massing to create the tower should be simplified to create a cleaner massing. This revised design should also address the flat east elevation which is devoid of windows or any detailing and rises four or five floors above the neighboring rooftops. A rendering from Saint Paul Street is necessary to show how much of the elevation would be visible from this vantage point.
  - The use of heavy horizontal lines seems to be an effort to reinforce the horizontal plane. This isn't necessary; the design should allow the eight-story tower to read as an eight-story tower.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff recommends concept approval of the mass and scale with the conditions outlined below. Details of design should return to the full commission.**



**Eric Holcomb**  
**Director**

## MAPS & IMAGES

